

**Feb. 15, 2017**

**Testimony from Julian Madison, Professor of History at Southern Connecticut State University, President of Southern Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors (SCSU-AAUP), Member of Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors (CSU-AAUP), and National Council Member of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) representing Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont.**

**Testimony to the Appropriations Committee Higher Education Subcommittee in support of funding for the CSCU system and public higher education.**

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee and Higher Education Subcommittee:

I am Julian Madison, president of the SCSU-AAUP, member of the CSU-AAUP state council, and a national council member of the AAUP representing Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Vermont. I come from a family that not only understands the value of higher education but actually lives it. I have four children. Two have graduated from college and the younger one is a second year law student at Vanderbilt University. The third will graduate from college in Ohio in May and will begin earning his M.A. this fall. The youngest is a sophomore at UConn and is already looking at schools across the country to earn a Masters' of Fine Arts. They are the latest in a long line of family members who are college graduates. On both sides of my family, each person has earned at least a Bachelor's Degree going back five generations. It has helped my family get ahead financially, kept us off any aid in the states we lived, allowed us to positively influence those with talent and ambition, and helped give back to the communities where we live. I know that *you* know the individual benefits of a college education.

We all know that a college degree cannot be taken lightly and, as such, cannot be done on the cheap. We all know that. It has to be earned through hard work and one must sometimes fight through the tears and frustrations that sometimes come along. In the end the individual who earns her or his degree will appreciate it more. I know my former students do.

But this is more than just about individuals. It is about benefits to our society. Long ago Connecticut students stopped competing against just those from this state. Now our students are competing against the nation and the world. Technology has simultaneously made the world smaller and more complex. Over half the jobs that will be available in ten years have not yet been invented. Conversely, over half the jobs in existence today will not exist in ten years. If Connecticut is to keep up with the world, our schools must have adequate funding.

With that in mind, I always tell my students that few of their professors are concerned about their getting a job. Jobs are plentiful. We want them to have careers. We want them to be able to change careers at a moment's notice when their job or entire industry ceases to exist. Today the average person will have changed jobs 15 times by the time they are 38 years of age. While some of this may include summer jobs in college, the point remains that industries come and go and jobs come and go. Our students must be able to adjust and they cannot do that by simply taking online courses, getting a degree despite learning little, and getting a job. That is extremely shortsighted and leaves students at a huge disadvantage later in life. It also disadvantages the state.

Forty-four percent of Connecticut's college students attend its community colleges and the CSUs. If higher education is not adequately funded, then the state will suffer. A college degree means higher pay, fewer people depending on the state to take care of them, less poverty, more people able to buy health insurance, and voting and political participation will be higher.

Today the middle class is shrinking and there are a few individuals who want it to happen. But that desire is more based on personal gain because the truth of the matter is that the state and nation will suffer. A shrinking middle class will increase the need for dependency on the government. If you want fewer bureaucracies and have the desire to spend less money on the needy then committing to higher education is the only way out.

And there is one other thing. More people in the middle class equates to all of us being safer walking the streets. Few street crimes are committed by those with well paid jobs. Individuals with no job, no education, no skills, and no hope are the ones most likely to break the law in order to survive. And we will all suffer as a result.